

Downham Preparatory School and Montessori Nursery

And

Downham Nursery School

5th July 2020

Letter to All Parents

Dear Parents

At the end of last week, we received the new government guidelines for re-opening all schools and nurseries in September. We are now busy revising and re-writing our updated Covid-19 Risk Assessment and Policy. As soon as it is ready, we will send a copy home to you.

From the start of term in September, the school will be open to all Year Groups and nursery children of all ages. The government has issued the following statement:

“Schools should be clear with parents that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies, (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc.).”

Any other absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

All staff and children who were in the extremely vulnerable or vulnerable category, will now be allowed back into school and all pupils will wear school uniforms.

Following the new guidelines, the school day will be structured differently. The children will continue to be taught in a protective ‘bubble’. All desks will face the front, with children sitting alongside each other (not opposite). This is how our classrooms have always been set up, with the exception of the Art Room.

There will be no specific measure for social distancing within the ‘bubble’ but the teacher should try to maintain, wherever possible, a distance of 2 metres from the pupils. Younger pupils and nursery children and their teachers are not expected to maintain social distancing, but will be taught and looked after in separate groups (bubbles). Preparatory School pupils will continue to be taught in the same classroom for all lessons, except for Art and P.E. They will only use their own personal stationery and books. However, sharing of other resources e.g. library books, history artefacts etc. is now permitted but they must be sterilised between users.

We will no longer be taking children’s temperatures. Masks should not be worn by children or staff (unless they are looking after a sick child or helping with intimate care). There will be no assemblies or collective worship with children from different ‘bubbles’. Each group of children will have a designated entrance/exit. Hot lunches will be available and we will send home more information before the start of term.

We are very lucky to have plenty of outdoor play space. This will be divided into different zones for each 'bubble' to use at playtimes. We have stayed open throughout the height of the pandemic and all of our Covid-19 cleaning regime is very well embedded into our daily routines, and this will continue into the new term.

Summer School

All of the same precautions and procedures apply to our Summer School. If you have not yet returned your booking form, please do so ASAP.

Curriculum Studies and Assessments

In September we will be teaching a full curriculum. In line with government guidelines, we will be concentrating on catching up on missed lessons, especially in English and Maths. There will, however, be some lessons that cannot be resumed until restrictions are lifted e.g. swimming, recorder or wind instruments, contact sports or any other activity which could cause the virus to spread.

Reports

All tests and exams in both Primary and Nursery were cancelled by the government this term in all schools. We sent a written report home at the end of the Christmas Term for every Primary child and during the Spring Term we held Parents' evenings to feedback test and assessment results to parents. Nursery parents also had meetings with their child's keyworker. The government then ordered all schools to close on 20th March.

Schools and nurseries have remained closed for the whole of the Summer Term, with only a small number of pupils still in attendance. The government decided to cancel all official testing and assessments, and we therefore have no new data to report on this term. When the children return in September, they will need time to adjust and settle back into school routines. During the first half of term, their teachers will be assessing any gaps in their knowledge and plan their teaching and lessons accordingly.

In the second half of the term, we will use the assessments that the children missed during the Summer Term. This will not include the Key Stage 2 Year 6 SATS, as these will not now be made available to schools until May 2021. The expectation is that most children will take the whole of the term and part or all of the Spring Term to recuperate the time and lessons lost. As we have small classes, we are aiming to complete our 'catch-up' by Christmas. We will send home a report at the end of the Christmas term. We will of course be sending you regular updates and more detailed information before the start of term.

Please keep watching our Instagram posts, and thank you for your kind comments. We have enjoyed making them and we plan to continue to post regular news throughout Summer School and during the new term.

Elizabeth Lafferty-Sharpe

Principal